

# News from Ed Markey

**United States Congress**

**Massachusetts Seventh District**

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**CONTACT: ANGELIQUE SKOULAS**

**May 16, 2002**

**OR ISRAEL KLEIN**

**(202) 225-2836**

## **Markey Calls on Congress To Update Homebound Definition in Medicare Law**

***Lawmaker Vows to Offer Amendment at Energy and Commerce Medicare Markup***

**WASHINGTON, DC** -- Representative Edward J. Markey (D-MA) senior member on the House Energy and Commerce Committee today joined with former Senator Bob Dole, Senator Susan Collins (R-ME) and David Jayne founder of the National Coalition to Amend the Homebound Policy, in calling on Congress to amend the homebound definition by striking the restrictive requirement in the Medicare law which dictates the frequency and duration of home health beneficiaries absences from the home.

"The time is ripe to finally do-away with restrictions in this 32 year old definition that serve only to imprison home health beneficiaries like David Jayne, in their own homes," Rep. Markey who is co-chair and founder of the Congressional Alzheimer's Task Force stated. "The homebound definition ignores the mobility and freedom that modern day technology affords. We have the perfect opportunity to amend homebound in the Medicare law as we look to reforming Medicare in the coming weeks."

Home health beneficiaries meet the qualifications for home health services because their medical condition means that they can leave home with "considerable and taxing effort". However, the Medicare law also stipulates that absences from the home be of "infrequent and of short duration." Despite meeting all the criteria under the law for needing a skilled nursing benefit, a quadriplegic beneficiary who is lifted into a wheelchair and uses specially adapted transportation risks losing his benefit should absences from the home become more than "infrequent" and go beyond the arbitrary time-frame of a "short duration." Attendance of a graduation or a family reunion puts beneficiaries at risk of losing their benefit.

Rep. Markey continued, "Current policy forces these people to choose between crucial care and fundamental freedom. This policy runs counter to what the American's with Disabilities Act stands for, and the freedoms that this country is built upon. Prohibiting home health beneficiaries from living their lives to the fullest is just plain wrong. Against all physical odds, David Jayne has the motivation and courage to risk his home health benefit by leaving his home to advocate for the thousands like him. At the very least Congress should update the homebound definition to reflect the real world that home health beneficiaries like David Jayne live in."

Rep. Markey was successful in amending the homebound definition in 2000 with the inclusion of language to allow home health beneficiaries to attend adult day care and religious services. In 2001, Rep. Markey re-introduced the Homebound Clarification Act to strike language in the homebound requirement that restricts homebound patients from leaving their homes.

For additional information please visit Rep. Markey's website @ <http://www.house.gov/markey/>

# # #